Need for redefining Dowry

1476. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the recent judgement of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, holding that the demand for money by a husband from his in-laws in meeting domestic expenses, will not come under the ambit of dowry;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto, as such judgement may be taken advantage of by greedy in-laws with the tacit connivance of lawyers, to get out of connotation of Demand for dowry; and

(c) whether Government have any intention of filing a revision petition in the Supreme Court to reverse this judgement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The National Commission for Women is reviewing the provisions of the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 to make the Act more effective and will also be examining the judgement while making recommendations in this regard. In view of this, there does not appear to be any need to file a revision petition in the Supreme Court.

Reports regarding ICDS

1477. SHRI KRISHAN LAL BALMIKI:
SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of reports, studies and surveys including the National Family Health Surveys (NFHS-3) and the Focus on Children Under Six (FOCUS) have indicated child development services of the Integrated Child Development Scheme;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to make the programme effective enough?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) and (b) The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3) have brought out provisional data on some selected indicators including the nutritional status of children below 3 years in 29 States/UTs. As per the findings of NFHS-3, performance of States/UTs in reducing malnutrition amongst children varies considerably. While there has been significant reduction in prevalence of malnutrition amongst children below 3 years in some states, in many others, the reduction has been far from satisfactory.

A report titled 'Focus on Children Under Six' (FOCUS) has been brought out by the Citizens' Initiatives for the Rights of Children Under Six in December 2006. FOCUS survey covered only 6 States, *viz*, UP, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. The survey also pointed out wide variations in implementation of the ICDS amongst the States covered.

The Hon'ble Prime Minister in a letter addressed to the Chief Ministers, has expressed concern over the ineffective implementation of the Scheme and impressed upon them the need to set up an institutionalized review process at their level after carrying out a detailed assessment of the Programme in their States; lay special emphasis on the programme status in areas with concentration of minority communities and preponderance of Scheduled Castes and Tribes; adequately empower Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to monitor and supervise the working of these centers; make line officials firmly accountable for their actions and report on a quarterly basis on further developments in this sector.

(c) Several steps have been taken in the recent past to increase the effectiveness of the delivery of services under ICDS are:

(i) Expansion of the ICDS Scheme to 466 ICDS Projects and 1.88 lakh AWCs under 1st Phase of expansion.

(ii) Further expansion of ICDS Scheme to 173 Projects, 107274 AWCs and 25961 Mini-AWCs under 2nd Phase of expansion.

(iii) Operationalization of sanctioned Projects/Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) sanctioned/permitted for operationalisation till the end of IX Plan.

(iv) Doubling of financial norms for supplementary nutrition from Rs. 1/- to Rs. 2/- per beneficiary per day.

(v) Sharing of 50% cost of supplementary nutrition with the States/ UTs.

(vi) Constant emphasis on States/UTs to: (a) Ensure regular supply of supplementary nutrition as per schematic norms and (b) Ensure delivery of other services *viz.* immunization, health check-up, referral services, nutrition & health education and pre-primary education through effective convergence with the Schemes/ Programmes of Ministry of Health, Education and Rural Development (Drinking Water Supply).

(vii) Setting up of a Central Monitoring Unit (CMU) at National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD), to monitor the Scheme through independent professional Organization/institution in each state/UT. This would be in addition to the monitoring mechanism in place at present.

(viii) A National level Monitoring Committee has been constituted under the Chairpersonship of MOS (WCD), to oversee the entire functioning of ICDS Scheme and to ensure that the services are delivered to the target groups in an effective manner and the objectives of the scheme are fulfilled within the overall framework of the ICDS Scheme.

As a result of these measures, number of operational ICDS Projects and AWCs has gone up from 5267 and 6.49 lakh, as on 31.3.2004, to 5724 and 7.81 lakh respectively, as on 30.9.2006. Number of beneficiaries of supplementary nutrition and pre-school education has also gone up from 415.09 lakh to 654.65 lakh and 204.38 lakh to 271.28 lakh respectively during the same period.

PALNA Scheme

1478. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO:
SHRI SUDARSHAN AKARAPU:

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have prepared a Scheme called the "PALNA" Scheme for unwanted girl children;